

Planning Advisory Group: Report to Walberswick Parish Council

Planning Application ref DC/17/2086/FUL
Westons, The Street, Walberswick IP 6UA

4.06.2017

1 This backland site lies within the Walberswick Conservation Area to the rear of Anchorlea and in the vicinity of two listed buildings, Thorpe View and The Stables. Anchorlea itself is identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal as a building which contributes positively to the special character of Walberswick.

Within the last decade the site has been developed with a small annexe for guest accommodation associated with Thorpe View. The annex is a simple, unobtrusive structure with a mono pitched roof, small windows and low eaves.

2 The current application is to demolish the annexe and, following a land exchange, replace it with a larger building serving the same purposes and in the same location but accessible from Westons. Whereas the previous application included parking spaces within the curtilage of Thorpe View, the current proposal relies on use of valuable green space adjoining The Stables.

No dimensions have been provided but it would appear that the proposal would increase the footprint of the annexe by about 30% to 122m², the equivalent floor area of a four bedroom house.

3 The new design departs radically in form and character from the existing annexe. A tall central section is proposed incorporating full height, north facing social spaces with a 'kids mezzanine' above bathrooms to the south, overlooking the garden of Anchorlea. The social spaces project forward of single storey extensions on either side which accommodate two large double bedrooms and more bathrooms. A large covered veranda surrounds the central projection. This will be glazed on three sides, above and below the veranda roof.

The building will be clad in reclaimed timber, with timber windows and corrugated metal roofing.

The eaves levels (un-dimensioned) of the central section are raised in order to clear the ridges of the adjoining bedrooms. Seen in conjunction with the shallow pitched roofs, the effect will be to distort the scale of the building so that appears even larger than it is. The effect is increased by the over complicated subdivision of windows.

4 The Conservation Area appraisal contains the objective that development should 'maintain and enhance the quality of the distinctive natural and built environment'. Policy DM21 of the Local Plan states that 'proposals that constitute poor design....' will not be permitted. In this context, the Planning Advisory Group considers that the application should be rejected for the following reasons:

- The symmetrical composition gives a monumental character to the annexe which is inappropriate for its use and location
- The shallow pitched roofs and extensive areas of glazing introduce alien elements into the Conservation Area
- The form and extent of the proposed annexe will have a detrimental effect on the setting of the two adjacent listed buildings and the adjoining house Anchorlea
- The extent of glazing to the social spaces is likely to generate light pollution detrimental to the amenity of neighbours and in conflict with the objective of Policy DM26 of the Local Plan.
- The justification given for the demolition of a sound building within the Conservation Area less than 10 years old is unconvincing. The applicant's objectives could be more easily achieved by judicious alteration and extension of the existing structure

The planning consent for the original application ref C07/1479/FUL imposed a restriction to ensure that the use of the annexe remained ancillary to the main house. This restriction should be re-imposed in any subsequent consent.